



Direction 2008

Issues, Accomplishments, & Priorities



© Lada Stransky



The Director's Message



Direction 2008 is our third “direction” document – and the first for me as Director. I am excited to build upon the many successes we’ve had and to break ground on several new projects. I am particularly motivated to broaden the Department’s funding base, to connect children with nature, and to build more collaborative relationships with stakeholders, private landowners, and local and state government agencies — all of which will benefit wildlife and habitat and ensure access for hunting, fishing, and trapping along with other outdoor recreation. These issues are my horizon for 2008 and beyond.

Our Fish and Game Commission has a heart for wildlife and is working hard to set sound policy. I am constantly impressed by employees’ dedication to our mission and to the Department. Together, we’ll make a difference for the wildlife and the people of Idaho.

Direction 2008 is a link between our strategic plan, *The Compass*, and the work that you – Department employees – do. It is organized by the four goals in *The Compass* and should help guide your **work planning** for the upcoming year and the **Department’s budget development** for the next fiscal year.

***Direction 2008* does not mention the more routine, but no less important, activities this Department has done and will always do.** We could not and would not fulfill our mission without looking after these everyday tasks. Each day Fish and Game employees listen to the public, monitor populations, review and comment on projects affecting wildlife, stock fish, conduct research, enhance habitat, enforce regulations, train teachers, answer questions, and educate and work with the public on all things concerning fish and wildlife in Idaho.

I expect that 2008 will bring many changes. It is only my second year as Director, and we have fresh leadership across the agency. We also have a shifting landscape – both literally and figuratively – with burgeoning energy development, shifting values about wildlife, changing demographics and development, and an unpredictable economy. Our immediate challenges include managing wolves and grizzly bears, protecting sage-grouse populations, and building a land legacy. Although our attention is drawn to these urgent day-to-day tasks, we must also keep our sights on the horizon.

Calvin P. Thoen

The Landscape 2008: Timely Issues

- **NARROW FUNDING BASE** — new tasks, rapid state growth, and shifting values towards wildlife require additional funding so that “all who pay benefit and all who benefit pay.”
- **NATURE DEFICIT DISORDER** — The average child spends 44 hours per week plugged into electronic media and is becoming more disconnected from nature while childhood obesity, attention deficit disorders, and developmental problems are increasing.
- **INVASIVE SPECIES** — Exotic and invasive plants and animals may alter or convert fish and wildlife habitat and compete, hybridize, or prey on native and other desirable fish and wildlife.
- **PARTICIPATION IN WILDLIFE-BASED RECREATION** — Participation in hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing is shifting both nationally and in Idaho. Because half of the Department’s revenue comes from license sales, it must understand the relationship between participation and license sales.
- **HABITAT FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE** — As Idaho’s population grows and land and water use practices change, greater emphasis will have to be placed on conserving and improving habitat.
- **GRIZZLY BEAR AND WOLF MANAGEMENT** — The delisting of Yellowstone grizzly bears and the proposed delisting of wolves bring increased duties and funding challenges to the Department.
- **IDAHO WILDLIFE CONSERVATION STRATEGY** — Conserving species that are at risk, and thereby avoiding regulatory burdens of the Endangered Species Act, will require new funding sources and broader stakeholder involvement.
- **OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLES** — The use of off-highway vehicles has increased dramatically in the past decade, creating new challenges for wildlife and public land management.
- **MULE DEER MANAGEMENT PLAN** — Mule deer populations are not meeting objectives in the southern and eastern parts of the state, and demand for mature buck hunting opportunity has increased.
- **ACCESS** — Private lands – once open to public access – are being closed to public access for hunting and fishing and fees increasingly are being charged for the privilege to hunt on private lands.
- **CUSTOMER SERVICE** — Customers want more from the Department, they want different things, and they want it faster.

Our Vision

The Department shall work with the citizens of Idaho in providing abundant, diverse fish and wildlife and ensuring a rich outdoor heritage for all generations

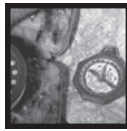
GOAL—Fish, Wildlife, and Habitat

SUSTAIN IDAHO'S FISH AND WILDLIFE AND THE
HABITATS UPON WHICH THEY DEPEND.

2007 Accomplishments

The accomplishments below correspond to the priorities in last year's *Direction 2007* and generally are listed in the same order. Other significant accomplishments also are noted.

- Drafted the *Idaho Wolf Population Management Plan* in cooperation with 6 stakeholder groups.
- Monitored over 600 radio-collared deer and elk to evaluate impacts of wolves on prey populations and supported a graduate student research project in eastern Idaho to better understand the relationship between mule deer and elk.
- Created a Farm Bill Coordinator position in the Upper Snake region to work with the Natural Resource Conservation Service and private landowners.
- Completed the *Aquatic Nuisance Species Plan for Idaho* and worked with the Idaho Department of Agriculture and local weed districts to control Eurasian watermilfoil, to treat 3 Department fishing ponds in Canyon County, and to survey 18 high-risk waters for zebra/quagga mussel (none detected).
- Participated in all Cooperative Weed Management Areas and joined with other partners to form the new one in Payette County. Served on the Idaho Weed Control Association and Idaho Weed Coordination Committee. Treated 13,600+ acres of noxious weeds, reseeded 2,100 treated acres, and mapped 35,000 acres of wildlife habitat for the presence of noxious weeds.
- Expanded inventory and monitoring efforts for species of greatest conservation need including surveys for ferruginous and swainson's hawks, flammulated owls, harlequin ducks, Wyoming ground squirrels, fisher, trumpeter swans, American white pelicans, pygmy rabbits, wolverine, and great gray owls.
- Provided technical assistance to 338 landowners affecting 33,681 private acres and 83 stream miles for species of greatest conservation need.
- Coordinated re-seeding of 6,510 acres of Idaho Department of Lands land and 82,710 acres of U.S. Bureau of Land Management land as part of the Murphy Complex Fire rehabilitation.
- Worked side-by-side with Idaho Department of Lands, U.S. Forest Service, and U.S. Bureau of Land Management on fire suppression and rehabilitation for the 51,000-acre Chimney Complex Fire.



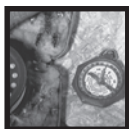
- Protected wintering mule deer by focusing enforcement efforts in Magic Valley, Southeast, and Upper Snake regions.
- Offered 10 Department-owned surplus properties for sale to the U.S. Forest Service, which submitted a \$14 million budget item to purchase 3 of them in 2009. Contracted work to estimate the value of the remaining wildlife mitigation debt in southern Idaho with the intent to settle with Bonneville Power Administration.
- Implemented the *Brucellosis Action Plan* with eastern Idaho ranchers and the Idaho Department of Agriculture and regained Idaho's "brucellosis-free" status.
- Monitored West Nile virus on Wildlife Management Areas and coordinated containment with mosquito abatement districts. Monitored chronic wasting disease and avian influenza.
- Removed approximately 22,300 lake trout and 8,000 rainbow trout from Lake Pend Oreille to help recover kokanee, and co-developed a decision tree with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service to improve spawning conditions for kokanee.
- Coordinated with the U.S. Forest Service to use both natural and prescribed burning for the Clearwater Elk Collaborative.
- Initiated new projects under the Idaho Bird Inventory and Survey program to address high-priority management issues, such as pelican-fish conflicts in eastern Idaho and curlew use of nesting habitat in southwestern Idaho.
- Recruited "citizen scientists" to help monitor birds at Important Bird Area sites and at bald eagle and peregrine falcon nests.
- Led 11 local sage-grouse working groups, of which 6 have completed local conservation plans and 5 are developing them. On-the-ground projects are occurring statewide.
- Began implementing the *Grizzly Bear Conservation and Management Plan* after Yellowstone grizzly bears were delisted in March.
- Provided data and recommendations for several county comprehensive planning efforts, including Lemhi, Fremont, Bannock, Bingham, Caribou, Franklin, Boundary, Bonner, Kootenai, Ada, and Custer counties.
- Investigated and prosecuted several illegal Chinook salmon cases and have ongoing investigations of about 20 suspected instances of commercialization. Violation rates have steadily dropped from 22% in 2001 to a low of 5% in 2007 on the South Fork Salmon River, clearly demonstrating the effectiveness of law enforcement presence.

- Drafted a Post Falls hydropower settlement agreement with final settlement expected in early 2008.
- Provided technical and financial assistance on about 8,300 private acres under the Habitat Improvement Program, on 12,816 private acres enrolled in the Conservation Reserve and Enhancement Program, and on 8,000 private acres enrolled in other Farm Bill programs.
- Completed 7 fish screening projects, 3 fish barrier removal projects, 2 tributary reconnect projects, 1 diversion elimination project, consolidated 2 other diversions, and replaced 1 gravity diversion with a pump system to benefit native and anadromous fish.
- Completed *Management and Conservation Plans* for Yellowstone cutthroat, Bonneville cutthroat, and Lost River whitefish, and began a 5-year status review of bull trout to determine if protection under the Endangered Species Act continues to be warranted.
- Designed and completed 80% of construction facilities to hold captive westslope cutthroat trout brood stock at Cabinet Gorge Hatchery.
- Renovated and updated Pahsimeroi Fish Hatchery to rear up to 1 million summer Chinook salmon and incubate up to 6 million steelhead eggs on a disease-free water source.
- Received a \$500,000 grant to restore habitat in the Pack River delta in partnership with Ducks Unlimited and Avista Corporation.



2008 Priorities

- Support the delisting of wolves and subsequently implement the *Idaho Wolf Population Management Plan*.
- Focus wildlife research on the impacts of predators on big game populations and the interactions between deer and elk.
- Revise the mule deer population monitoring strategy that provides annual estimates of abundance, composition, body condition, age structure, and survival.
- Work with the Governor's Task Force on Domestic Sheep/Bighorn Sheep to maintain both domestic sheep grazing and viable bighorn sheep populations.
- Continue Lake Pend Oreille kokanee recovery efforts.
- Focus enforcement efforts on habitual violators, unlawful commercial hunting/fishing activities, anadromous fisheries, and wintering mule deer.



- Identify bull trout populations in Idaho where Endangered Species Act protection is no longer needed and pursue delisting them in those areas.
- Complete a management plan for Snake River white sturgeon, and update the cutthroat trout range-wide status assessment.
- Increase monitoring to assess the impacts of West Nile virus on sage-grouse.
- Protect mule deer winter, summer, and transitional ranges from development and noxious weeds, and enhance/rehabilitate mule deer winter ranges.
- Expand surveys for zebra/quagga mussels, attempt to control and eradicate *Hydrilla* from the Bruneau River system, and continue to cooperate with regional teams in preventing aquatic nuisance species in the West and in the Columbia River Basin.
- Coordinate aerial sagebrush seeding of 22,420 acres on Idaho Department of Lands land and 256,740 acres of U.S. Bureau of Land Management land for the Murphy Complex Fire rehabilitation. Harvest salvage timber on 400 acres and reseed 200 acres of grasslands for Chimney Complex Fire rehabilitation. Actively partner with land management agencies to prevent wildland fires and lead fire rehabilitation efforts.
- Finalize Post Falls Dam mitigation settlement agreement with Avista Corporation.
- Begin implementing Pack River delta cooperative restoration project.
- Continue fish habitat improvement work, particularly in the Lemhi, Pahsimeroi, Potlatch, and upper Snake River basins.
- Develop new measures for improving fish habitats, including nutrient supplementation and fish supplementation measures, to incorporate into the Northwest Power and Conservation Council's Fish and Wildlife Program.
- Work with Atlanta Power, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and other agencies to finalize operational guidelines for the fish ladder at Atlanta Dam to benefit bull trout and redband trout in the Boise River.
- Become active partners in providing technical support to local governments for community planning and in applying conservation principles in design of neighborhoods and communities and find appropriate sources of revenue to fund such efforts.
- Summarize the first 4 years of the Idaho Bird Inventory and Survey program.
- Shift efforts in managing noxious weeds to early detection and rapid response.
- Continue to implement the *Brucellosis Action Plan* and monitor avian influenza and West Nile virus.

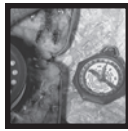
GOAL—Fish and Wildlife Recreation

MEET THE DEMAND FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE RECREATION.

2007 Accomplishments

The accomplishments below correspond to the priorities in last year's *Direction 2007* and generally are listed in the same order. Other significant accomplishments also are noted.

- Opened 596,587 private acres and 633,570 public acres of land for use by hunters and anglers for a total of 1.2 million acres maintained under the *Access Yes!* program.
- Renovated 10 fishing/boating access sites in 5 regions by installing new ramps, docks, and restrooms.
- Detected 222 violations to the motor vehicle restriction rule in the Southwest Region although compliance increased from 78% in 2004 to 82% in 2007.
- Used results from the mule deer hunter survey conducted by the University of Idaho to revise the *Mule Deer Management Plan*.
- Developed the Idaho Fishing Planner, a web-based, interactive search engine for anglers wanting information and customized maps on regulations, travel, fish species present, stream flow links, facilities, and stocking history.
- Added several areas to the Idaho Birding Trail, promoted the guidebook, and began developing a website to help wildlife enthusiasts build their itineraries for bird-watching trips.
- Worked with local communities to develop two new urban fisheries in the Southwest region, and started a project with Idaho Falls Parks and Recreation Department to develop fishing in a city park.
- Worked with U.S. Forest Service on the Payette, Salmon/Challis, and Targhee/Caribou National Forest Travel Plans.
- Encouraged thousands of youngsters to hunt and fish throughout the state by offering mentored hunting trips for upland game, waterfowl, and big game; mentored fishing trips; large-scale fishing clinics; and combination hunting, fishing, and shooting skills and wildlife education clinics.
- Completed a GIS database of outfitter and guide operating areas that is now available to the public and Department staff through the Idaho Outfitters and Guides Licensing Board website.
- Restructured the incentive awards program for Hunter Education instructors to make it more cost-effective and useful for instructors.



2008 Priorities

- Adjust seasons and regulations to diversify mule deer hunting opportunities that are evenly distributed around the state.
- Investigate opportunities to partner with hunting dog clubs to extend upland bird hunting to those who want help with acquiring or training a hunting dog.
- Incorporate the outfitter and guide GIS database into the Idaho Hunt Planner and Idaho Fishing Planner.
- Continue to implement recommendations from the *Five-Year Statewide Fishing/Boating Access Facilities Plan 2005-2009*.
- Continue to evaluate effectiveness, public understanding, and compliance with the motor vehicle restriction rule; work with Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation to manage off-highway vehicle use; and evaluate the need for the motor vehicle restriction rule following implementation of the new U.S. Forest Service travel policy.
- Fully open the Sandpoint WaterLife Center to the public.
- Improve *Access Yes!* property rule enforcement; provide and evaluate non-monetary incentives for participants; and expand funding options for the program.
- Encourage youth to hunt and fish, especially by offering more mentored experiences, providing local shooting ranges, and working with communities. Complete the Department's Lewiston, Jerome, Blacks Creek, and Farragut shooting ranges.
- Evaluate the Hunter Education curriculum and revise components that will make it more easily accessible to first-time and young hunters.
- Evaluate efforts that encourage youth to hunt and fish.
- Compile angler use and demographics data and describe the economic impacts of urban fishing programs in the Treasure Valley.
- Expand successful efforts of trapper education in the Upper Snake Region to other parts of the state.



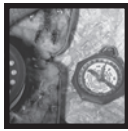
GOAL—Working With Others

IMPROVE PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING OF AND
INVOLVEMENT IN FISH AND WILDLIFE
MANAGEMENT.

2007 Accomplishments

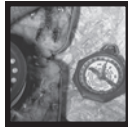
The accomplishments below correspond to the priorities in last year's *Direction 2007* and generally are listed in the same order. Other significant accomplishments also are noted.

- Consulted and engaged stakeholders in new ways during the planning processes for mule deer management and wolf management.
- Developed a comprehensive *Aquatic Education Plan* that includes a curriculum for the statewide Trout in the Classroom program.
- Established the WILD About Early Learners curriculum for pre-kindergarten through 2nd grade teachers in all but the Salmon Region.
- Hosted nearly 1,700 5th grade students for Salmon and Steelhead Days as well as thousands of other students through classroom visits, Free Fishing Day events, and outdoor skills workshops.
- Wrote, edited, and produced 3 videos for Idaho Public Television's *Dialog for Kids* including *Bye, Bye Birdie* which won an Emmy Award.
- Collaborated with the cities of Boise, Nampa, and Caldwell to sponsor five 4-day kids fishing camps.
- Built a large outdoor aquarium in Cascade in cooperation with the Cascade High School Advanced Biology class and the City of Cascade.
- Produced an 11-part television news series on Idaho's native fish, which aired on commercial television stations statewide.
- Completed *Wolves in Idaho*, an educational video for Hunter Education that covers wolf biology, identification, reintroduction to Idaho, impacts on big game, and safety for hunting dogs and pet dogs.
- Promoted the Make the Call campaign with Citizens Against Poaching and partnered with a call service to monitor and relay CAP calls around-the-clock.
- Received over 180,000 visitors per month to the Department's website.
- Created the Idaho Master Naturalist program to educate and train citizen scientists who will assist the Department in a variety of survey, inventory, monitoring, and education projects.



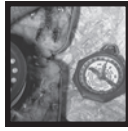
- Created a special report edition of *Fish and Game News* designed to convey a big-picture look at the Department's extensive efforts to restore mule deer populations, and wrote a new brochure to better explain the motor vehicle restriction rule as an aid to hunting.
- Improved the consistency and format of the regulation booklets and simplified steelhead regulations.
- Developed 84 Hook & Bulletin information boards and began placing them in vendor locations and regional offices across the state.
- Launched weekly statewide fish reports compiled by bureau staff for each of the 7 regions.





2008 Priorities

- Assess participation in and satisfaction with the Department's public involvement processes.
- Reorganize and reword the big game regulation booklet to make rules more easily understood and improve the consistency and format of the regulation booklets.
- Create a Spanish-language brochure that explains basic fishing rules.
- Launch a reorganized website that is more customer-centric than organization-centric, that has a children's page, and that has web pages with region-specific information.
- Develop an interagency Kids and Families Outdoors initiative.
- Conduct teacher workshops around the state to introduce teachers to the Trout in the Classroom program.
- Increase public awareness about preventing the spread of aquatic nuisance species such as zebra mussel and *Hydrilla*.
- Expand databases and database application available on the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Information System and improve the portal interface that enables collaborators and the public to access those data.
- Emphasize programs and events that increase public awareness of nongame and watchable wildlife.
- Emphasize programs and events that get children interested in fish, wildlife, hunting, and fishing.
- Enhance the Idaho Master Naturalist program.
- Engage the National Wild Turkey Federation to promote turkey hunting clinics for beginning hunters, with their Women in the Outdoors program as a model.
- Work with local communities to reduce conflicts between grizzly bears and humans.



© Terry Thomas



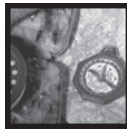
GOAL—Management Support

ENHANCE THE CAPABILITY OF THE DEPARTMENT TO
MANAGE FISH AND WILDLIFE AND SERVE THE PUBLIC.

2007 Accomplishments

The accomplishments below correspond to the priorities in last year's *Direction 2007* and generally are listed in the same order. Other significant accomplishments also are noted.

- Participated in the *ad hoc* Legislative/Commission committee to address Department funding concerns and to consider non-traditional funding sources.
- Installed the new automated licensing system, by Outdoor Central, that seamlessly went live on June 1st.
- Drafted a 3-dimensional management planning prototype based on the *2007-2012 Fisheries Management Plan* and test-drove it for the mule deer and wolf plans.
- Completed web-based relational databases and GIS links for juvenile fish and lakes and reservoir inventories, and completed the anadromous fish adult trapping and spawning portion of the new Hatchery Data Management System.
- Enrolled 10 Department employees in the Certified Public Manager program.
- Posted announcements through electronic bulletin boards, websites, and email lists; devoted a telephone line and an email address for announcements and applications; and offered open jobs to internal candidates for cross-training and/or advancement.
- Aligned annual enforcement work plans with *The Compass* and *Direction 2007*.
- Received an analysis by the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation of focused efforts to encourage lapsed anglers to purchase fishing licenses.
- Tried new marketing strategies for the Super Hunt drawing causing a \$20,000 increase in sales and reversing a 3-year decline in sales.
- Nearly 1,000 volunteers collected more than 3,500 pounds of raw sagebrush seed during 18 outings in southwest Idaho and the Magic Valley, donating nearly 4,800 hours.
- Decentralized 10 staff positions.
- Reduced salary contention by designing a transparent matrix recognizing performance rating, market location, and longevity.
- Clarified the relationship between the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the Commission, and separated the financial systems.
- Launched the Land Legacy Trust with Commission, Governor, and Congressional support.



2008 Priorities

- Offer the Certified Public Manager program to employees.
- Improve strategies for recruiting job applicants and retaining a well-qualified workforce.
- Develop more web-based training for staff through Boise State University.
- Replace the heating/cooling system in the Panhandle Regional Office.
- Furnish energy-efficient, cost-effective, and employee- and public-friendly facilities at Department Headquarters.
- Implement immediate measures in the *Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Action Plan*.
- Add databases to the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Information System, implement an Extranet, and encourage partners to participate.
- Develop a database for the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy.
- Move to a two-year cycle for developing deer, elk, pronghorn antelope, black bear, and mountain lion regulations.
- Change the Mandatory Harvest Report program to improve data quality and timeliness.
- Align annual work plans with priorities in *The Compass, Direction 2008*, and management plans.
- Develop a uniform method to capture and report Conservation Officer efforts and activities.
- Simplify and streamline purchasing procedures.
- Adjust the permanent workforce and enhance funding to meet challenges of state management and conservation of at-risk species.
- Experiment with ways to increase the number of new anglers and to improve the retention rate of previously-licensed anglers.
- Use marketing campaigns, education programs, and mentoring programs to increase participation in hunting, angling, and wildlife-based recreation above current levels.
- Move forward with broadening the Department's funding base.
- Propose a mitigation settlement to Bonneville Power Administration, auction off properties with little wildlife value through Idaho Department of Lands, sell surplus lands to U.S. Forest Service, and establish the Land Legacy Trust fund.
- Investigate the potential of intra-agency communications technologies.

Our Mission

(Idaho Code Section 36-103)

All wildlife, including all wild animals, wild birds, and fish, within the state of Idaho, is hereby declared to be the property of the state of Idaho. It shall be preserved, protected, perpetuated, and managed. It shall only be captured or taken at such times or places, under such conditions, or by such means, or in such manner, as will preserve, protect, and perpetuate such wildlife, and provide for the citizens of this state and, as by law permitted to others, continued supplies of such wildlife for hunting, fishing and trapping.



Idaho Fish and Game adheres to all applicable state and federal laws and regulations related to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, gender, disability or veteran's status. If you feel you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility of Idaho Fish and Game, or if you desire further information, please write to: Idaho Department of Fish and Game, P.O. Box 25, Boise, ID 83707 OR U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Federal Assistance, Mailstop: MBSP-4020, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Arlington, VA 22203 Telephone: (703) 358-2156.

Costs associated with this publication are available from IDFG in accordance with section 60-202, Idaho Code. 01/2007/1,250 PCA 11814